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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001371

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

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TAGS: PGOV PTER ASEC PHUM PREL NP

SUBJECT: LARGE GROUP OF NEPALI MAOISTS ATTACK VILLAGE,
SINGLING OUT VICTIMS

REF: A. KATHMANDU 1198

B. KATHMANDU 1053

C. KATHMANDU 915

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski, Reasons 1.5(b),(d)

1. (C) Summary. Several hundred Maoists attacked a village near western Nepal's largest city July 10, killing two mainstream party workers apparently in retaliation for cooperating with security forces. The attackers also brutalized other villagers and warned family members of the victims not to hold funeral rites. The Maoists had not engaged in large-scale operations since June 15, the date marking the beginning of a month-long unilateral cease-fire called--and later retracted--by Maoist leader Prachanda. During this time, however, the insurgents continued to kidnap and execute soldiers and government workers, as well as individual civilians such as teachers. In the period since they repulsed a major Maoist offensive on May 27, security forces seem increasingly to have the upper hand. End Summary.

Maoist Mob Raids Village, Killing Two...

2. (SBU) Hundreds of Maoists regulars raided a village near Nepalgunj in the western lowlands on July 10, killing two and injuring seven others, police sources relate. Between three and four hundred Maoists reportedly entered the village of Samshergunj, about seven kilometers northwest of Nepalgunj, about 9 p.m. They dragged two men from their houses and summarily executed them. The men were activists for the leftist Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and rightist Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), respectively. The insurgents also destroyed houses in the village. Police believe the attack came in revenge for a June incident where two Maoists were apprehended by villagers and turned over to authorities.

Beating and Threatening Others

3. (C) The Chief District Officer (CDO) for Banke district related that the two men killed July 10 had been beaten before they were shot. According to press reports, funerals for the two men could not be held on time because Maoists threatened the families with violence if they proceeded with the last rites. The CDO also noted that during the raid other villagers had had their legs broken with iron rods.

4. (SBU) Representatives of the Human Rights Organization of Nepal (HURON) told us that they planned to send a team to the village July 14 to investigate.

First Large-Scale Maoist Attack in Month

5. (SBU) The July 10 incident was the Maoists' first large-scale offensive military operation since its opportunistic encounter with a bivouaced Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) company June 12 (Ref A). (Note: In another, similar encounter in late June, Maoists ran into a joint security patrol in remote eastern Dhankuta district and killed one policeman. End Note.) In a May announcement which was later disavowed, Maoist leader Prachanda indicated that the Maoists would unilaterally declare a cease-fire during the Nepali month of Asadh, which began June 15 (Ref C). July 10 was the twenty-sixth day of the twenty-nine day month. The only other major incident during Asadh was the July 5 bombing of the Prime Minister's party office in Kathmandu (Ref 1315).

Abductions, Killings Continue

6. (C) During the past month the Maoists have not launched attacks against the security forces' fixed positions. However, during this period Maoists have conducted numerous raids like the July 10 Nepalgunj incident. In such raids at least four RNA soldiers have been abducted from their homes and later killed. On other occasions the insurgents have used this tactic against civilians as well, taking school principals, teachers, farmers, party workers, postmen and kin of military or police officers from their homes and killing them. Most of these incidents involved only small groups of

Maoists, however, and not two or three hundred as reportedly were involved in the July 10 incident.

A Likely Anomaly

17. (C) It remains unclear whether recent events reflect a change in the Maoists' tactics, a de facto unilateral cease-fire, an expedient reaction to the increased effectiveness of the security forces, or a combination of all of the above. The previous lull dated from May 27, when the army repulsed a large-scale Maoist attack on security forces in Rukum (Ref B). Indications are that the RNA has become both more sophisticated and more confident in recent weeks, and the insurgents have been weakened as a result. Except as another example of the Maoists' continued efforts to instill fear in their countrymen, the July 10 attack, only a few miles from a major RNA installation in Nepalgunj, seems vindictively anomalous.

MALINOWSKI